

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

Donald L. Boisvert - June 8, 1975

DISTINGUISHED GOVERNORS AND SENATORS, DR. O'BRIEN, FR. GRAHAM,
MEMBERS OF FACULTY, PARENTS, RELATIVES, FRIENDS AND GUESTS,
FELLOW GRADUATES.

TODAY, WE MAKE HISTORY: THE FIRST GRADUATING CLASS OF THE
EMBRYONIC CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY. OF COURSE, VERY FEW OF US SITTING
HERE THIS AFTERNOON WOULD CONSIDER OURSELVES TO BE "TRUE"
CONCORDIA GRADUATES. FOR THE MOST PART, WE IDENTIFY WITH THE
LOYOLA COMMUNITY - ITS HISTORY, VALUES, AND TRADITIONS. THIS IS
NOT TO SAY THAT WE REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE CONCORDIA AS A FAIT
ACCOMPLIT. RATHER, OURS IS A VERY DEFINITE INHERITANCE WHICH
REMAINS INTIMATELY LINKED TO THE LOYOLA WE ONCE KNEW. AFTER
SPENDING TWO, THREE, OR FOUR YEARS AT LOYOLA COLLEGE, IT BECOMES
DIFFICULT - IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE - TO THINK OF OURSELVES AS
CONCORDIANS.

NONETHELESS, LET US PAUSE AND BRIEFLY REFLECT ON THOSE
QUALITIES WHICH WOULD MAKE OF CONCORDIA A GREAT AND UNIQUE UNIVERSITY.
IMPLICITY, OURS IS A CHALLENGE: THAT OF CREATING - INDEED, MOLDING -
A VIBRANT AND DYNAMIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING IN QUEBEC.

WHAT MAKES THE PROCESS ALL THAT MORE PAINFUL AND AWKWARD IS THE FACT OF TWO DISTINCT INSTITUTIONS - EACH WITH ITS OWN HERITAGE AND SELF-IMAGE - AGREEING TO COME TOGETHER PARTLY OUT OF THEIR OWN ACCORD AND PARTLY AS A RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT DICTATES. LET US NOT BE NAIVE. THIS MARRIAGE IS BY NO MEANS A MUTUAL UNION. NOR IS IT COMPLETELY THE FRUIT OF A FREE AND DELIBERATE CHOICE ON THE PART OF BOTH PARTNERS. CONCORDIA IS MORE PROBLEMATIC THAN IT IS CERTAIN - AND THE MARRIAGE YET REMAINS TO BE CONSUMMATED.

OF THOSE ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS WHICH ARE THE HALLMARK OF A TRUE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING, LET US SINGLE OUT TWO IMPORTANT ONES: LEADERSHIP AND SCHOLARSHIP. TOGETHER - AND IN THEIR MANY FACETS - THEY SET THE TONE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THAT ALL-IMPORTANT ORGANIC IDENTITY AND SENSE OF BELONGING WHICH STUDENTS AND FACULTY CAN RALLY TO AND OUT OF WHICH THEY CAN GROW AND LEARN TOGETHER. WITHOUT THESE TWO ELEMENTS OF RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AND CREATIVE SCHOLARSHIP, CONCORDIA - TRY AS IT MAY - WILL NEVER REALIZE ITS INHERENT POTENTIAL.

IN SPEAKING OF THAT "STYLE" OF LEADERSHIP WHICH IS CRUCIAL TO THE FULL FLOURISHING OF CONCORDIA, WE NOTE THAT THE FIRST YEAR OF THE UNIVERSITY'S OPERATION HAS RAISED SOME HARD AND COLD QUESTIONS IN THE MINDS OF MANY LOYOLA PERSONS. LEADERSHIP

PATTERNS AT CONCORDIA MUST BE DISTINGUISHED BY CREATIVE FORESIGHT AND THE ABILITY TO RESPOND TO THE BASIC HUMAN AND PEDAGOGICAL NEEDS OF BOTH STUDENTS AND FACULTY. NO ADMINISTRATIVE HIERARCHY SHOULD BE MORE CONCERNED WITH SETTING STANDARD NORMS AND REGULATIONS THAN IT IS WITH FURTHERING THE HUMAN EMANCIPATION AND INTELLECTUAL AWARENESS OF THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY. CONCORDIA'S FUTURE REMAINS A FLUID ONE. IN LARGE MEASURE, IT IS THE UNIVERISTY'S POLICY-MAKERS WHO SHALL EITHER MAKE OR BREAK THIS FUTURE.

WE CAUTION YOU: DO NOT FALL PREY TO THOSE FACILE SOLUTIONS WHEREBY EVERYTHING IS REDUCED TO SIMPLE FACTS AND FIGURES. A UNIVERSITY IS A LIVING AND BREATHING COMMUNITY OF PERSONS INVOLVED IN A SHARED PROCESS OF HUMAN GROWTH. IT IS NOT A BUSINESS CORPORATION - NOR IS IT A LEARNING FACTORY. ACCORDINGLY, ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP MUST REFLECT THIS CONCERN WITH PEOPLE-CENTERED NEEDS AND PROBLEMS.

WE ASK FOR THAT "STYLE" OF LEADERSHIP WHICH IS CREATIVE, RESPONSIVE, AND ABOVE ALL, RESPONSIBLE. SIMPLY PUT, THIS MEANS AN ADMINISTRATION WHICH SHARES ITS DECISION-MAKING POWERS AND WHICH IS SENSITIVE TO THE UNIQUE QUALITIES OF CONCORDIA'S TWO FOUNDING MEMBERS. CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY IS NOT SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY. IT IS THE LOYOLA CAMPUS AND THE SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS CAMPUS TOGETHER.

MORE IMPORTANT THAN ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP, HOWEVER, IS THE UNIVERSITY'S ROLE AS A COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS. WITHOUT TEACHERS AND STUDENTS, THE UNIVERSITY SIMPLY DOES NOT EXIST. THE UNIVERSITY'S ROLE IS PRIMARILY - ONCE CAN EVEN SAY, EXCLUSIVELY - THAT OF BEING ENGAGED IN THE TEACHING-LEARNING EXPERIENCE. EVERYTHING ELSE IS SECONDARY. CONCORDIA MUST MAINTAIN AND RE-AFFIRM THIS COMMITMENT TO THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN LOYOLA'S PRIDE THAT WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CLASSROOM IS THE TRUE MEASURE OF ITS GREATNESS AND SPIRIT. HAVING BEEN EXCLUSIVELY AN UNDERGRADUATE INSTITUTION, LOYOLA HAS DARED TO EXPERIMENT WITH NEW AND IMAGINATIVE MODELS FOR THE INTELLECTUAL ENRICHMENT OF BOTH ITS FACULTY AND STUDENTS. IN LARGE PART, WE HAVE BEEN MORE THAN SUCCESSFUL. CONCORDIA COULD WELL BENEFIT FROM OUR EXPERIENCE.

ABOVE ALL, WE ASK FOR COMMITTED AND STIMULATING TEACHERS: PERSONS CONCERNED WITH THE HUMAN AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR STUDENTS. WE ASK THAT CONCORDIA RECOGNIZE THE PRIMACY OF TEACHING AND REWARD ITS EXCELLENCE. WITHOUT A CRITICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, FUTURE GENERATIONS OF CONCORDIA GRADUATES MAY WELL HAVE LITTLE TO REMEMBER THEIR ALMA MATER BY. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL OF US HERE TODAY TO SEE TO IT THAT THIS DOES NOT HAPPEN.

THERE IS AN OLD SAYING WHICH READS AS FOLLOWS: "CAUGHT BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: ONE DEAD; THE OTHER, POWERLESS TO BE BORN." WE BESEECH YOU, DO NOT ALLOW THIS TO BECOME CONCORDIA'S PERPETUAL AND EVER-CONSTANT FATE. CONCORDIA MUST DARE TO GO BEYOND THE ENTRENCHED INTERESTS OF BOTH LOYOLA AND SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS. THIS UNIVERSITY, IF IT IS TO SURVIVE, MUST CREATE ITS OWN SPIRIT: A SPIRIT BORN FROM A SYNTHESIS OF TWO LIVING TRADITIONS.

WE, THE GRADUATES OF 1975, LEAVE A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF OUR LIVES BEHIND US. OUR GRATITUDE GOES OUT TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO STAND HERE TODAY: PARENTS, TEACHERS, FELLOW STUDENTS, AND COUNTLESS OTHERS. WITHOUT THEM, THIS MOMENT HOLDS LITTLE MEANING. IN SUM, THESE COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES BELONG TO ALL OF YOU AS THEY DO TO US. AS WE LEAVE AND BEGIN ANEW, OUR HOPE IS THAT CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY - OUR UNIVERSITY - BECOME TRULY WORTHY OF OUR ALLEGIANCE.

LOYOLA, WE BID THEE FAREWELL. CONCORDIA, WE GREET THEE.

THANK YOU.